

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 CU-04

NIC-01 A-01 M-03 OMB-01 SY-10 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00

RSR-01 /113 W

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R 190023 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6079

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MEXICO 3580

NOFORN

E. O. 11652: XGDS1

TAGS: PINT/MX

SUBJECT: STUDENT TAKEOVER AT UNAM

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: A GROUP OF STUDENTS FROM ARCHITECTURE AND MEDICAL FACULTIES TOOK OVER UNAM RECTORY FOR PERIOD OF APPROXIMATELY 8 1/2 HOURS ON MAY 17. ACTION PLANNED PRINCIPALLY TO PROTEST EVENTS AT UNIVERSITIES OF PUEBLA AND CHIHUAHUA; PROTEST LARGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS REJECTED IN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND TO ASSERT PRESSURE FOR STUDENT SELF- GOVERNMENT IN THE FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE. BUILDING PEACEFULLY RETURNED TO UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES AT 8 P. M. END SUMMARY.

2. STUDENT LEADERS (NOT IDENTIFIED IN PRESS ACCOUNTS) STATED THAT RECTORY TAKEOVER WAS THE RESULT OF DECISION OF " STUDENT MASS", PROTESTING REPRESSION IN UNIVERSITIES OF PUEBLA AND CHIHUAHUA, FAILURE TO SOLVE PROBLEM OF CO- GOVERNMENT IN SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, AND IN SUPPORT OF 2000 APPLICANTS DENIED ADMISSION TO SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.

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MIXED BAG OF CAUSES ALSO INCLUDED PROTEST AGAINST " BRUTAL REPRESSION" OF RESIDENTS OF THE IZTACALCO NEIGHBORHOOLD. (CASE INVOLVES EVICTION OF RESIDENTS IN POORER DISTRICT.)

3. MEDICAL SCHOOL ISSUE SPRINGS FROM THE REJECTION OF SOME 2000 APPLICANTS FOR ENROLLMENT IN CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR. REJECTED APPLICANTS, PRESS POINTS OUT, WERE REJECTED NOT ONLY ON GROUNDS OF OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS, BUT ON BASIS OF LOW PERFORMANCE ON ENTRANCE EXAMS. STUDENT PROTESTORS CLAIM SUCH ENTRY EXAMINATIONS ARE " ELITIST AND UNFAIR" AND SHOULD BE ABOLISHED; ADVOCATING OPEN DOOR POLICY TO ANY APPLICANT REGARDLESS OF ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS. SOME OF REJECTED APPLICANTS SEIZED UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH FACILITY AND HAVE ATTEMPTED TO INSTITUTE A " POPULAR SCHOOL OF MEDICINE", REFUSING TO RELINQUISH BUILDING UNTIL ADMITTED TO REGULAR MEDICAL SCHOOL. NEVERTHELESS, RELATIVELY FEW MEDICAL SCHOOL REJECTS TOOK PART IN YESTERDAY' S OCCUPATION, PROMPTING SOME STUDENT LEADERS TO SUGGEST THAT MOVEMENT DEMAND ENTRY ONLY FOR THOSE WHO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN DEMONSTRATION. (ALSO CREATING DOUBTS AS TO SINCERITY OF " OPEN DOOR" ADMISSIONS DEMAND.)

4. ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS DEMANDED SELF- GOVERNMENT FOR THAT FACULTY. SPOKESMAN, JOSE ROJAS DECLARED THAT IT IS THE PRESENT UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE, UNITED WITH THE GOVERNMENT THAT GENERATED VIOLENCE. HE STATED THAT 13 MONTHS HAD NOT BEEN SUFFICIENT TO COME TO A PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF DEMANDS FOR SELF- GOVERNMENT. (SELF- GOVERNMENT PLAN WOULD OUST CURRENT ARCHITECTURE FACULTY DIRECTOR CAPDEVILLE, AND ESTABLISH IN HIS PLACE A GOVERNMENT OF SECTION CHIEF UNDER A SINGLE CO- ORDINATOR WITH STUDENTS AND FACULTY BEING EQUALLY REPRESENTED.) ROJAS ASSERTED THAT DIRECTOR CAPDEVILLE HAD SPENT A MILLION PESOS (US\$80,000) PROMOTING HIS POINT OF VIEW, BUT THAT TALKING AND COMMITTEES HAD SOLVED NOTHING, LEAVING OPEN ONLY PRESENT COURSE OF ACTION, I. E., OCCUPYING RECTORY AS MEASURE OF VIOLENCE AND PRESSURE.

5. DEMONSTRATION BEGAN WITH MASS STUDENT MEETING IN FACULTY OF MEDICINE, FROM WHICH STUDENTS MARCHED TO RECTORY BUILDING. AT RECTORY THE TAKEOVER WAS, AS USUAL IN THESE EVENTS, CALM AND ORDERLY. PROTESTORS " INVITED" RECTOR
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AND RECTORY WORKERS TO LEAVE THE BUILDING. SIMILARLY DISLODGED FROM RECTORY WAS JOSE MARTINEZ MEZA, WHO PREVIOUSLY HAD OCCUPIED RECTORY OFFICE OF INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS IN A SEPARATE BUT RELATED PROTEST OF CONDITIONS IN ARCHITECTURE AND MEDICAL SCHOOLS. IN MAIN HALL OF RECTORY STUDENT PROTESTORS MILLED ABOUT WAVING BANNERS AND PLACARDS DEMANDING " SELF- GOVERNMENT FOR ALL", " MORE CLASSROOMS

AND TEACHERS", " NO REJECTED STUDENTS", " DOWN WITH SELECTION BY CLASSICAL EXAMINATIONS" AMONG OTHER THEMES AND HEARD USUAL SPATE OF INFLAMMATORY ORATORY. STUDENTS PEACEFULLY RETURNED BUILDING TO UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES AT 8 P. M. , BUT PROMISED THAT A SIMILAR OCCUPATION WOULD TAKE PLACE ON JUNE 4. NO DAMAGE TO BUILDING REPORTED.

6. MEANWHILE, UNIVERSITY RECTOR GUILLERMO SOBERON CONTINUED NORMAL ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES, MERELY SHIFTING HIS HEADQUARTERS TO OFFICE OF CHEMISTRY FACULTY. IN PRESS STATEMENT, SOBERON POINTED OUT THAT MANY OF THE CURRENT DEMANDS REFER TO MATTERS WHICH DO NOT DIRECTLY CONCERN UNAM. UNAM STUDENTS, HE STATED, " CONSCIOUS OF THEIR OWN AUTONOMY SHOULD ABSTAIN FROM MEDDLING INTO THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER INSTITUTIONS, SO AS NOT TO GIVE OTHERS THE EXCUSE FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS IN UNAM AFFAIRS." ADDRESSING QUESTION OF ARCHITECTURE SCHOOL REFORMS, HE SAID THAT HE HAD TRIED TO SOLVE QUESTION WITHIN LEGALLY ESTABLISHED UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS, BUT THAT " NEW WAVES OF VIOLENCE WOULD ONLY TEND TO IMPEDE A SOLUTION". SOBERON CALLED ATTENTION TO THE ALMOST OVERWHELMING INDIFFERENCE OF GREAT MAJORITY OF STUDENTS, MOST OF WHOM HE SAID WERE IN THEIR CLASSROOMS AND LABORATORIES, " IGNORING THE INVITATION TO ACTIONS OF VIOLENCE".

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INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 CU-04

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6080

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7. WHILE YESTERDAY' S EVENTS APPEAR TO BE IN THE NATURE OF PROTEST FOR PROTESTS' SAKE, MANY STUDENTS FEAR THAT AUTHORITIES MAY BE FORCED TO CLOSE UNIVERSITY IF SUCH

ACTIVITIES CONTINUE. ON UNAM CAMPUS, RUMORS ARE RIFE THAT GOVERNMENT DOES INDEED PLAN SUCH A TOTAL SHUTDOWN OF UNIVERSITY WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL YEARS, PREPARATORY TO AN EVENTUAL COMPLETE RE- ORGANIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN MEXICO. SOBERON' S COMMENTS IN LENGTHY EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW IN EXCELSIOR TEND TO SUPPORT SUCH RUMORS. SOBERON REVEALED VERY GRIM STATE OF AFFAIRS IN WHICH COST OF EDUCATION RISING DUE TO " RETENTION PROBLEM". RETENTION REFERS TO INCREASING LENGTH OF TIME A STUDENT MUST SPEND IN UNAM IN ORDER TO OBTAIN DEGREE BECAUSE OF OVER- CROWDED CONDITIONS, POOR ACADEMIC STANDARDS, ETC.

8. SIMILAR VIOLENCE, STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS TOOK PLACE AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES AROUND THE COUNTRY YESTERDAY, AND ARE BELIEVED TO BE CO- ORDINATED OR AT LEAST RELATED TO EVENTS AT UNAM. AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SINALOA, TWO STUDENTS WERE KILLED IN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN RIVAL STUDENT FACTIONS, EXACT CAUSE OF THE ENCOUNTER NOT YET KNOWN. IN DURANGO THE RECTORY OF THE AUTONOMOUS JUAREZ UNIVERSITY WAS OCCUPIED BY STUDENTS DEMANDING THE OUSTER OF RECTOR CARLOS GALINDO AND SECRETARY JOSE HUGO MARTINEZ. THEY ALSO DEMAND TOTAL
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AUTONOMY FOR THE UNIVERSITY WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE ANY INTERVENTION ON PART OF STATE GOVERNMENT IN THE ELECTION OF NEW RECTOR. SIMILARLY, DISTURBANCES BETWEEN GROUPS OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS AT AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF TABASCO LAW SCHOOL RESULTED IN SEVERAL INJURIES, AND AGAIN REAL CAUSE OF DISTURBANCE NOT KNOWN.

BEGIN SECRET NOFORN
MEXICAN SECURITY FORCES GROWING MORE CONCERNED AS THE DEGREE OF UNITY IN STUDENT MOVEMENT INCREASES. THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS OF A CO- ORDINATED STUDENT CAMPAIGN TO TAKE PLACE WEEK OF MAY 17 -24, WITH POSSIBLE MULTIPLE RECTORY OCCUPATIONS TO TAKE PLACE ON MAY 19. END SECRET NOFORN. WILL KEEP DEPARTMENT INFORMED OF DEVELOPING EVENTS.
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